Aristasia Treasure Trove

The Philosophy of Dress Tuesday, Sep 1 2009

Aristasian Fashion and Style and Aristasian Society and Culturearistasia12:56 pm

Insights often come in a flash. What I mean by that is that a very important idea may often be conveyed to one in an instant, as a sudden vision or apprehension of the true nature of things. I suspect that happens to all of us. The difficult part is following up that insight: grasping it between one's teeth and methodically shaking out the meaning of it. This activity is what is called philosophy. At least it is the feminine and spiritual approach to philosophy: taking the insights or intuitions that are granted to us and diligently teasing out their full meaning.

Such an insight came to me yesterday. There has always been a lot of philosophical work and discussion in Aristasia on the subject of dress and its real meaning, : on why bongos dress as they do, what it signifies about their culture and how it helps to create the spiritual and psychological conditions that are the Pit. Yesterday I accompanied my friend to the post office and I was watching a group of bongos shuffling about in their jeans, soft, floppy clothes and bits of tracksuit, and suddenly an insight came to me. At first it seemed like a very strange one.

"These people are naked!" I suddenly realised. It seemed like an odd thought, because obviously they were wearing clothes. Admittedly that is giving the word "clothes" an exceptionally broad definition, but they were undeniably wearing *something*. Now of course this insight was not unaware of that. It was saying "These are not *clothed* people. They are naked bodies with some rags thrown over them. They are *essentially* naked. And they are not naked like a classical nude in a painting. They are naked in the way that cats and dogs and monkeys are naked."

I knew what I was seeing was true, but it was hard to make rational sense of it. After all, to say a clothed person is a naked person with clothes on is surely a tautology. Cannot one say that of *any* clothed person from the 1930s or from ancient Greece? No, this insight was saying. Not in the same way. Those people were authentically dressed these people in front of me were not. They were just

naked bodies with odd bits of cloth thrown over them. The comparison that had been in my mind when I first saw them was a reference in a Quirinelle book to "the hour at which ladies like to dress for cocktails". Such ladies *dressed*; these people did not dress. They just put things onto what they still regarded as mere bodies in the animal sense: essentially naked.

Why was that the case? I asked myself. Was it something to do with their loose and casual attitudes to what they call "sex"? Or was that too simple an answer?

I tried to explain the answer to a brunette friend, partly because having to explain an idea often forces it to be clarified. We started to analyse it. What was the fundamental difference between *dressed* people — whether in the 1950s at the cocktail hour, or at any other hour, or in the eighteenth century, or in Mandarin China, or in a tribal society — from these "naked apes" with clothes on?

Suddenly it began to make sense. By going back to more ancient societies we were taking the thing back to its roots. We were applying the principles of Essentialist thought. If one looks at the earlier societies, it is clear that dress is a *ritual* thing. In tribes, adornment may represent what are called "totem animals" (actually the animal embodiments of Janyati or Archetypes), they also represent status within the order of the tribe, which is conceived as a microcosm of the order of the cosmos. The tasselled fringes worn by some Red Indian tribes represent the sun's rays, with all the metaphysical significance of solarity. Dress in old China was carefully regulated by ritual considerations and those of social function, which — as everywhere else, including the Mediaeval West — was seen not only as reflecting, but as being organically related to the functioning of the cosmos itself.

By the time we get to the Renaissance West, these ritual considerations are waning. We are moving from a Sattwic to a Rajasic society. But as is the case in every aspect of Rajasic society, it continues to reflect, in its outward-directed forms, the upward-directed prototypes of it Sattwic roots. They are increasingly unaware of the spiritual and metaphysical significance of their dress — which is now vestigial — but the thread is still not broken. Even in the 1950s, on the very verge of the Eclipse, women dress for cocktails, men go to business carefully attired with bowler hats and furled umbrellas. Postmen, policemen, cinema usherettes and dozens of other functionaries (and I use this term in the positive and vestigially-Sattwic sense of "performers of functions within the Great Order") are meticulously uniformed. Evening dress is worn for theatre, opera and dining at good restaurants and hotels, but even at the local cinema and *palais de dance* (vulgarly termed "the pally") people are conscious of "going out" and dress accordingly.

What we are saying is that all these people are *dressed* in the same sense that a tribal dancer, a Chinese mandarin or a mediaeval courtier is dressed. The thread is diminished but as yet unbroken. With the eclipse and the onset of a Tamasic society, the thread, in dress as in most other things, is broken. People are no longer dressed in the true sense of the word. In a Sattwic society, as Dr Coomaraswamy often said, "body and soul are served together". The objects of craft, whether a drinking-bowl or a chariot, have both functional and metaphysical significance. In a Rajasic society, the ritual (or intellectual) significance of the products of human art and craft is increasingly forgotten; but there is still a sense of *rightness* that links them back to their Sattwic origins. And of all artefacts, clothes are the closest to us — both literally and figuratively.

If we look at the typical bongo clothes they are, in their own words designed to be "casual" and to reject the element of *form* (that is why they are called *informal*). In theory their design is for comfort and convenience and many bongos do choose their dress for those reasons (or at least imagine that

they do). In this respect, bongo clothes are precisely "animal" in nature because they are designed to perform the same functions as a non-human creature's fur or feathers — simply to keep her warm and be as convenient as possible in all ways.

Now as soon as one says this, it is clear that even the term "animal" requires some qualification. The function of bongo clothes does not correspond to the *real* function of animal skin. It corresponds to the notion of animal skin held by the post-Darwinian mind. The notion that animals are simply "functional units designed* for survival" and that the best functional units are the ones that survive. This is not what tradition teaches us about animals. From tradition we learn what every traditional people knows: that animals embody particular *qualities*. Thus their fur or feathers, like human artefacts, have both a functional and a symbolic aspect. So when we said at the beginning that bongo dress resembles the nakedness of dogs, cats or monkeys, we were, in fact taking an unfairly low view of dogs, cats and monkeys. They are in fact more *dressed* in the true meaning of the term, than the bongo wearing what are termed Pit-pyjamas. Their fur is not merely functional. It is part of the expression of the fundamental reality that lies behind dog-ness or cat-ness, while the Eclipse has precisely revolted against the expression of fundamental realities through outward appearance.

This is yet another illustration of the dictum that maid, as the Axial creature of this world, has the power to rise above the earthly state, *or to fall below it*. Sattwic humanity seeks to express realities that transcend the worldly plane. Animals cannot do this. Rajasic humanity reflects the earthly plane in all its beauty and variety, and, of course the earthly plane is the reflection of the heavenly. This is what animal also do, on a very different level. Tamasic humanity turns away from the earthly plane in the *downward* direction. Animals cannot do this either. They cannot desert their *thamë*, their natural worldly function, either by transcending it or by falling below it. In this respect, Tamasic humanity is below the animal level.

So how does Tamasic humanity fall below the animal level in its dress? In the first place by adopting a dress that is (in theory at least) solely functional and stripped of all symbolic depth no animal can do this. Secondly bongo dress often finds ways to fall below even this level: jeans are bought deliberately faded and torn, for example, expressing the desire not for simple functionality but for chaos and dissolution. Clothes are worn with jokes or commercial slogans spelled out across their fronts, not merely serving the functions of comfort and warmth, but also insulting the dignity of the wearer and turning her into something trivial and foolish. Clothes are often unnecessarily baggy and floppy, to a point where they must surely become cumbersome and inconvenient. In the quest for *symbolic* looseness and degeneration, the *actual* function of "comfort and convenience is left behind. I am sure the reader can supply many examples of her own, some of which we may be unaware of.

So is it true to say that nobody in the Pit is dressed? No. Businessmen, for example, are still dressed to express their function in a manner that is vestigially Rajasic. But note that this is under attack with "dressing down days", "informal offices" etc. The Pit has an inbuilt instinct to attack everything that is vestigially Rajasic, and we can expect to see the business suit coming under increasing attack**. It is common for bongos to refer to business people disparagingly as "suits".

The use of the term "suits" is deeply significant. The implication is that the person wearing a suit has simply *become* the suit. He is no longer a person, just a "suit". What is the reason for this perception? It is rooted in the Pit's hatred of Archetypes and of the concept of conforming to what it calls a "stereotype". It fears that in adopting the dress suitable to a function, the individual will be somehow swallowed up by the function and cease to exist. It has often been pointed out that the bongo in her loose, floppy clothes or her jeans and T-shirt is just as conformist as the most rigidly-uniformed functionary. Her style of dress is dictated from outside and is necessary for social acceptance within

particular bongo groups. The illusory "individualism" she has been taught to value is as stereotyped and mass-produced as any other form of conformity. When bongos dress differently from other bongos it is almost always in conformity with some particular group or sub-set within the Pit, often associated with some form of commercially-produced music.

Some might, therefore, be tempted to say that bongo "casual" dress is the exact equivalent of uniforms, suits or real-world fashions — both being the prescribed dress of a particular group or culture. However this is not actually the case. While both are equally prescribed, one is the dress of form, and the other is the dress of anti-form: and while anti-form is just as much a conformity as form, it does not thereby become a form. The "informal" or a-formal bongo is very consciously not "dressed" in the sense that a person from the real world is dressed. She often fears dress as something that might rob her of the looseness she mistakes for "freedom". Being dressed is a form of mask, and any mask might take away one's "real self".

The problem is that this "real self" is illusory, as one can see by looking at any group of bongo type-3s. How different are they from each other in their attitudes, manners, beliefs or behaviour? Among smartly dressed real people one finds far more variety of personality, far more distinctness. By rejecting form, one becomes a rootless, unfixed creature that can be blown about by every passing wind of propaganda, every new slogan or catch-phrase, every new fad or pseudo-morality. One becomes the perfect, rootless, manipulable proletarian.

NOTES

* Even the word "designed" is only used figuratively, since the theory asks us to believe that there is no intelligent "design" and that a dog evolved from a protozoon by a series of survival-related "accidents". Actually many biologists now deny this rather extraordinary notion; but we are concerned here with the popular view of animals as derived from what the average person imagines evolutionism to be saying: for it is this that has shaped the current belief as to what an animal is.

** It is possible however, that even some elements in the Pit are aware that a degree of Rajasic culture and formality needs to be retained if bongo administration is to remain functional, which may account for the almost anachronistic survival of the business suit to the present time. Curiously, what is being recognised here is that the "functionalist" view of dress leads, in practice, to dysfunctional behaviour.

Leave a Response »

Uniforms Saturday, Jun 7 2008

Aristasian Fashion and Style and Symbolism for Aristasiansaristasia9:40 pm

Miss Barbara admits:
I'm writing to prattle on about how utterly wonderful uniforms are. We all love a nurse in a crisp white uniform, and what blonde's knees don't tremble at the sight of an aviatrix in dress uniform or a sailor pette all decked out in her lovely white and

blue? We know the joys of seeing pettes in uniforms, but have we ever stopped to think about why uniforms are so thrilling? I think it might be because when we see a girl in a uniform, we see first her archetype and her function, and then we notice the girl underneath, all the more attractive for being a bit hidden by these greater and grander things. We love those girls who give themselves over to their functions because we know that by doing so, they are helping build the civilization to which we belong. Though I personally don't wear a nurse's or sailor's uniform, I do often think of my hat, gloves, makeup, and up-to-date clothes as my Aristasian uniform, which I wear very proudly, of course!

Leave a Response »

The Glory of Satin Saturday, Apr 19 2008

Aristasian Fashion and Stylearistasia2:31 pm

Anita here again, pettes, with a little disquisition on satin, which no one has ever said is a completely innocent fabric! Chiffon and lace connote fragility, daintiness, vulnerability, but satin … well satin is what is known as a sensuous fabric, both to wear and to behold, and nowhere is satin more sensuously used than in Trent.

Now, satin is a special type of weave, one that has more warps than fillings on its surface, which is what causes its sheen. It can be woven from silk, rayon or even cotton. Silk satin is the finest and most expensive, although rayon satin is almost as good. Because of its reflective properties, satin makes a girl look larger than she is, so it is worn to greatest advantage by very slim pettes.

Satin did not really come into its own as the fabric for elegant evening wear until Mlle. Madelaine Vionnet of Western Vintesse invented the bias cut. Bias cut fabrics are cut across the grain, you see, which allows a garment to fall in a smooth, flowing vertical drape, and to be rather easily manipulated into clingy, slinky gowns of transcendent grace and elegance. Bias cutting is relatively wasteful of fabric, however, as a pattern must be laid diagonally across the bolt, but it produces garments that are so deliciously fluid that pettes are willing to pay a bit extra.

Take the stunning black ciré satin gown above, as worn by Ursula Jeans in Noelle Coward's latest film, *Cavalcade,* which has just been released and is showing right now in local theaters all over Trent. The low, revealing bodice clings enticingly, as does the skirt down to the knees, where it is released into glistening folds which drape to the feet and spread over the

floor. Daringly black and ultra-slinky, modesty is maintained by a delicate bow of tiny diamonds applied to the decolletage, echoed by the jewels on the bracelets and on the scarlet red feathered fan.

To the right is Mary Lou Dix in a rather plain gown of pale lavender bias-cut satin. Its lines are almost severely simple and classic, yet its impact is in no way lessened thereby. On the contrary, the gown's utter simplicity displays Miss Dix's perfect figure without interposing the least distraction.

But bias-cut satin drapes so beautifully that even when the design is complex and unusual, a woman's figure cannot be easily concealed.

Look at Miss Carole Lombard in this close-fitting evening gown of black satin. The skirt appears twisted in a large, draped bow just above the knees, trailing off into a narrow train, echoed by a twisted halter held in place about neck and shoulders by a large diamond clip. At the risk of trying your patience, dearest pettes, let me finally show you Miss Lombard in the same dress, now covered with an unusual three-quarter-length cape of black satin, broadly banded in black monkey fur which falls outward in sprays.

Once again, girls, the quiet, self-possessed air of these women is not at all unusual in Trent. You will easily find see it in studio stills from the province such as these. You won't find any blank stares, nor any hint of hostile or indifferent alienation either, as I understand is quite common among models in the place called the Pit: Trentish women are always connected to everything around them not despite, but because of their self-possession.

Leave a Response »

Kadorian hair styles Sunday, Apr 6 2008

Aristasian Fashion and Stylearistasia12:55 pm

Miss Norma, our Kadorian fashion expert, declares:
Today we must take up a fashion matter I have flagrantly neglected: hair styles! (I *do* tend to get carried away with millinery matters, but then, I can't help myself, hats are so grand!) Hair style has become more important now than ever, because for the first time in almost a decade there is a sea-change in the offing. The flowing shoulder-length styles of Eastern Kadoria, with their smooth, neatly contained masses of hair, sometimes further defined by a hairnet, are now giving way to light, fresh, shorter, almost fluffy styles from Western Kadoria – a brand-new look! If you want to be turned into the prettiest girl at Miss Barbara's party, you might consider booking an appointment this afternoon at your local *coiffeuse* to try out one of these new hair-do's.

As shown in this photo, the future for short hair is a gentle winging away from the face. Hair is cut two-and-a-half to three inches all over the head and scalloped upwards into soft feminine waves at the sides. This is an easy and versatile style, which takes almost no time to care for, so it is ideal for a pette-on-the-go. Bracelet of pearls, pink Italian coral and gold, with buttons and earrings to match.

But you long-haired pettes needn't despair, Western Kadoria has something for you, too, which might make *you* the prettiest one at the party! The new fashion for longer hair lies in silken-smooth, close-to-the-head arrangements highlighted (and held in place) by veiling, combs, jewels or flowers. This pette wears smooth bangs with low waves brushing back to a cluster of curls held in place with ribbon and combs. (Glistening locks, courtesy of regular shampooing, of course!) Note the lovely little bouquet of bachlorette's buttons at the shoulder!

Last is a more traditional Western Kadorie style for hair of middle length. Again, sides are scalloped upwards in soft, close-to-the-head waves. Here a yard of 15-inch mauve veiling goes over the head and ties in back. Hold in place with pretty hatpins. Nice on dancing dates, but I would not wear this style to a party where there is any hope, er, I mean *danger* of rough brunettes – one might be a target! Stay on the *qui vive*,, pettes, brunettes can be powerfully moved by hairstyles, and I have heard *quite* a bit about Miss Barbara's cocktail parties!!

Leave a Response »

Aesthetics of Pettes in Space Saturday, Mar 15 2008

Aristasian Fashion and Stylearistasia7:31 pm

Miss Amalya Corinthian asked:
Having just finished reading the latest installment of *The Princess and the Captain,* I would like very much to reproduce the elegant curlicues with which the blondes and brunettes on the unfamiliar planet adorned their eyes. The problem is, I don't want it to look terribly unnatural. I've tried a bit with eyeliner, but that seems to clump together too much. Any ideas? I want it to be really subtle, but elegant and feminine.

Princess Mushroom replied:
What sort of eyeliner do you use? In my view the best eyeliner for all purposes, but certainly the *only* type for "temple-style" eyes as described in *The Princess and the Captain* is liquid eyeliner.

I wear liquid eyeliner almost every day of my life. Girls sometimes ask how I manage to get it on so neatly. Actually it is not very hard. Anyone who knows me will confirm that I am an absolute g'doinker in the handicraft department. If I can do it, you can – believe me. Just set aside a little time – and some cleansing pads – for practice and you will soon be doing it beautifully.

I have never gone in for curlicues, but I do use a long extended stroke beyond the lower-lid lining which might be called "modified temple-style".

People may differ on this but my personal experience leads me to say *make sure you get liquid eyeliner with a brush.* I have tried various brands (including some very expensive ones) that use pointy felt-tip-type applicators and I simply cannot manage them. A brush puts on the liner neatly without disturbing the skin (which causes smudges).

It does not need to be an expensive brand. The one I use most of the time comes at two shillings from a local street market. It is cheap, strikingly black, easy to apply and I love it to pieces.

Good luck!

Here is the passage which inspired Miss Corinthian:
Almost instinctively, raiAntala fell into step with the three youngsters as they marched to the café. It was down a cobbled side-street — a curious place with tinted windows and a pink-and-pale-blue neon sign. The design of everything was strange, and yet it reminded raiAntala of a dozen coffee bars she had haunted in Quirinelle. The strong rhythmic beat of the music that could be heard several doors away was very unlike Quirrie rock and roll, and yet had a certain decided kinship to it.

They entered a darkish room filled with a curious scented smoke. Tables and chairs in gleaming chrome were occupied by groups of brunettes, often dressed in black and with hair swept off their faces and rolled up into a coif with a spray of hair stiffened to stand up like a plume. Among blondes the fashion seemed to be for various shades of a pink lip-enamel lined with red. Among both sexes, heavy "temple-style" eyeliner seemed to be in fashion, often with cute curlicues emerging from the corners. Several customers were in school uniforms and were more conservatively coiffed and painted.

You can start reading *The Princess and the Captain* here.

Leave a Response »

An Art-Neo Palace Friday, Feb 22 2008

Aristasian Fashion and Style and Recommended Websitesaristasia6:44 pm

Following the article on Art Neo in Aristasia, here is an account of a visit to Eltham Palace, London, a fine example of Art Neo in Telluria.

Yesterday I went with two brunettes to what may be the finest private Art-Neo house in the world – certainly the finest to be located in a mediaeval palace!

You really must see for yourself. Take a virtual tour; and don't on any account omit the Dining Room or Virginia Courtauld's bedroom. This is Art-Neo splendour at its finest. (Once there, if the movie doesn't rotate for you, click and drag within the picture to turn it at will).

In the dining room, the ceiling is "gilded" with aluminium leaf – how terribly modern! and in the panorama the fireplace does not come across in its true splendour, so it is worth finding a close-up of that.

The palace itself is the most glorious marriage of rich tradition with up-to-the minute Art-Neo and we visited on the perfect day, gloriously sunny in early autumn when the great willows are still green and trailing into the moat, and yet there are also golden, yellow and red leaves of Autumn to be seen.

In the tea-room the waitresses are uniformed like Trentish maids and we had egg mayonnaise sandwiches followed by scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam with green tea for the orientally inclined and Earl Grey for the less so.

For those of us who are considering Art-Neo for the style of our own hestia, here is an example of the style at its very finest.

Leave a Response »

Art Neo in Aristasia Pura Sunday, Feb 17 2008

Aristasian Fashion and Style and Aristasian Society and Culturearistasia2:39 pm

Art Neo is often regarded as equivalent to Tellurian Art Deco, but it resembles only those parts of Art Deco that are theatrical, feminine and sound. It also includes some elements of what is usually termed Art Nouveau.
The term is also applied much
more broadly than Art Deco – for example, Trentish dance-band music is termed "Art-Neo music".

Art Neo is considered as primarily the art of Novaria which has spread to other provinces: notably neighbouring Vintesse and Trent. Art Neo is not merely an aesthetic style but an applied aesthetic philosophy.

Art Neo in Telluria has been called a "blind aesthetic" because while it provides a counter to the aesthetics of deformism it, unlike them, has no underlying philosophy. It was a healthy aesthetic reaction against the Cult of Ugliness, but it was no more than an instinctive reflex.

In Aristasia, conversely, Art Neo is a deliberate and conscious attempt to adapt traditional aesthetic and spiritual values to the exigencies of a machine age. Art Neo, with its recurring solar motifs and uplifting quality, is a fully considered attempt to come to terms with the "problem of the machine" and bring a machine-dominated world into conformity with the eternal Principles of tradition.

This is possible because technics in Aristasia, rather than growing out of a revolutionary rationalist and anti-traditionalist movement (such as the 17th-century "Enlightenment" in Telluria) have always been seen as the legitimate, if in some respects distant, descendant of traditional Spirit-centred science.

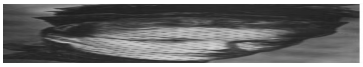
As in Telluria, images and forms from traditional cultures play an important role in Art-Neo style. While in Telluria this is a mere "playing" with traditional forms, albeit frequently with an instinctive feeling for their remythologising depth, in Aristasia this is done with a conscious intention of maintaining and restoring links with tradition and keeping modern culture well-rooted in the sacred and nourishing Ancestral soil.

From Art Neo in the Encyclopaedia Aristasiana

One Response »

The Mysterious Veil Friday, Jul 27 2007

Aristasian Fashion and Stylearistasia10:05 pm



Miss Nicola wrote:

I have just found this delightful picture of the Quirinelle actress Romy Schneider – some pettes might remember her from the film *Mädchen in Uniform*. I was quite taken aback by this and felt that I simply had to share it. There is something about a veil that is so mysterious, I never quite manage to pull it off myself.

Miss Gillian commented:

What a glorious veiled lady. Yes, I feel a veil is the most mysterious accessory too – in fact when you called it in your popup "The Mysterious Accessory" I found myself almost taken aback to hear it referred to as an accessory at all. Gloves are an accessory and a charming one. So are handbags. But a veil seems something almost too secret and sacred, too magical and mysterious to *be* an accessory. Something that marks out a woman as a strange and beautiful Creature Apart.

Well, I know it is an accessory, but does anyone know what I mean – or am I just being silly without even being a blonde?

Miss Barbara had a different point of view:

Miss Gillian, darling – there is nothing silly in a brunette's being captivated by the mystery and magic of a veil. Brunettes can be romantics too, you know. And should be in my opinion.

So I hope no one will think me iconoclastic if I demonstrate that veils are not always mysterious and shiveracious, but can sometimes be quite jinky. Not normally, I grant you, but here is a picture I found that captures the veil in its lighter mood.

I hope you all like it as much as I do, and if it gives one girl the courage to try a veil, I shall not have sent it in vain.

For I should just *love* to meet one of you in a veil.

And umm – does anyone have any thoughts on the subject of kissing through a veil. I confess the idea thrills me.

blush

One Response »

A Millinery Primer Part 3: More Hats Wednesday, Jul 4 2007

Aristasian Fashion and Stylearistasia8:59 pm

Miss Norma continues:

No more attempts at philosophy this time, Darlings, I'll cut right to the chase. So here is Marissa, our own high fashion model, wearing the *ne plus ultra* of floral hats – why, she seems to be carrying her very own meadow of June flowers about with her! (By the way, the diamonds are real! The Duchess of Alba keeps rooms at the Warwick, and she is in Bermuda for the week, so she lent Marissa a few of her diamonds in exchange for a credit under the photo.) Next time I shall show you some fall hats – which employ mainly fabrics, feathers and furs rather than flowers.

Oh, yes, and also a delightfully airy summer bonnet, set off with gay ribbons, that is actually called Fountain of Youth! Just like my favorite cocktail – an equal mixture of gin, vermouth and sugar syrup. (No kidding!)

Oh, but why keep you waiting for the Fountain of Youth? I see some liquid ones are already being set on their tray, so I suppose there is no better time to show you the eponymous hat. So here it is, too! The model's name is Sydney.

Miss Kresha reminisces:
The floral hat (pictured above) reminded me of the time when mother took me to her favorite dress and millinery shop and bought me my own first hat. Even though it looked nothing like the one pictured, it still invoked my memory. I was fourteen, aflush with anticipation and nervous. I must have tried on thirty hats, from pillbox to extravagantly costumed styles. It was then that mother stepped in and directed my attention to a wide brimmed straw in navy. A white polka-dot navy scarf and a navy polka-dot scarf were haphazardly twisted around the flat crown. The ends separated at the rear and then formed an opposing bow at the rear. Walking out of Malina's shop with my hat box swinging from my fingertips was an act of shouting to the world … "I, Kresha Matay, am a woman!!!"

For Part 1 see A Millinery Primer

Leave a Response »

At the Opera Friday, Jun 29 2007

Aristasian Fashion and Stylearistasia10:16 pm

Miss Barbara asks for advice:
Dears, I have a serious question to pose. I am going to the opera this Saturday and I just bought a lovely black velvet dress to wear with long black gloves and black velvet pumps and sheer black stockings. My dilemma, and I hope more experienced brunettes out there or perhaps a particularly savvy blonde will be able to rescue me, is: what kind of purse should I carry? I found the most perfect clutch with beaded off-white pearls and silver, but with a black dress? I just don't know. What do you pettes suggest? Anxiously awaiting your advice.

Miss Olyvya answers:
Oh, Miss Barbara, I hope I have caught you before you left for your opera! The purse problem is simple, darling, it just has to be black, of course, black with silver is fine. Big beads, little beads, heavy satin, even velvet — all will do quite nicely as long as it's black. And small.

Miss Violetta dreams:
I have always wanted to wear a dramatic hat, voluminous cape, and black satin Chinese-style gown. My long black hair would be elegantly drawn up into a tight bun; long earrings, perhaps black opal (my birthstone) would just graze the middle of my neck. I would enter the lobby of the opera house – all eyes turn to examine this glamorous, mysterious, imposing woman. Perhaps my hat has a bit of netting over the front, just enough to make my facial expressions enigmatic. I have a box all to myself, high-powered binoculars (plated with mother-of-pearl) on a pince-nez. Perhaps I am watching "Gotterdammerung", losing myself in the heavenly cries of the Rhinemaidens. In an ideal world, all bodies of water would be inhabited by nymphs and mermaids, forever combing their lustrous hair, forever luring travelers into their watery paradise.

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